



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

APPROVED 9/07/17

**Thursday, June 1, 2017
Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

PRESENT: Chairperson Bob Frost, Commissioners Bobby Alpert, Con Englehorn, Jace McKeighan, and Cynthia Wenstrom

ABSENT: Vice-chairperson Mike Milillo, and Commissioner Steve Dodd

STAFF: Bill Murphy, Director of Community Services; Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Senior Trails Planner; Natural Resources Coordinators Yvonne Massman, Robert Graves and John Loleit; Recreation Leader III Kelly Hayes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Frost called the meeting to order at 4:59 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present as noted above.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of May 4, 2017

COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 4, 2017 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER WENSTROM SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0).

5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE

Paul Staker, Interim Executive Director, highlighted activities from the past month. The Annual Citizen's Science Field Institute review was held on May 17th at Scottsdale Community College. Priorities were set for the year and there were presentations of the three initiatives: restoration best practices, corridor viability project to assess wildlife in the gooseneck area, and the water monitoring project.

The Annual City of Scottsdale and MSC meeting was held on May 16th during which the year was reviewed and future plans were discussed. Topics discussed included the expansion of the Junior Citizen's Science Festival and possible changes to the MSC/City of Scottsdale agreement.

6. DISCUSSION OF FUTURE UPDATE TO COS/CONSERVANCY AGREEMENT

Mr. Murphy gave an update on the meeting between the City of Scottsdale and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. He noted that as the relationship develops it will be necessary to make some adjustments to the agreement related to ongoing activities. One major focus has been on research. The City plans to apply for gaming grant funds that would require an amendment to the agreement so the funds could be applied to those research activities through MSC. Other possible amendments could focus on increasing patrols and the number of stewards, maintenance of trails and education. Mr. Murphy anticipates the amended agreement to be completed by fall.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that the MSC provides their professional services as well as involvement from other partners through the Field Institute to assess flora and fauna at on trails and trailheads and work associated with evaluation, restoration, and wildland fire prevention.

Over the summer, the City will be evaluating the idea of issuing an RFQ for an on-call contract for service. The candidate would bill the City based on services rendered.

7. TRAILHEAD HOST CONCEPT - FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Mr. Ekblaw recalled the discussion regarding the Trailhead Host concept. Staff is working with the City Attorney's Office to gain answers to expressed concerns, to evaluate possible impacts on the Preserve Ordinance, and identify possible items in the ordinance that may be in need of review. The ordinance currently allows police, fire, and Preserve staff to operate outside the confines of the ordinance when working in their official duties.

Staff members gave examples of ongoing issues and some isolated incidents where it would be beneficial to have an on-site Trailhead Host.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

Mr. Ekblaw explained that based on the County Parks model, the program would run from October through April, but the operation would be somewhat different because of the difference in the nature of activities allowed in the Preserve. Having someone on site would be beneficial in that they would be able to react to incidents in a timely fashion, to educate users on the proper etiquette for the Preserve, completing maintenance that staff might not be able to attend to in a timely fashion, and managing special use permits. Commission members expressed concerns about justifying putting a pad and utilities within the Preserve boundaries. Chair Frost opined that even with an on-site host, in the future, as Preserve activity increases, it will become necessary to have on-site staff at all of the trailheads.

8. TRAILHEAD DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT STATUS

Staff will provide an update on:

- Fraesfield and Granite trailhead design application and public meeting

Mr. Ekblaw noted that the draft for Fraesfield and Granite are close to completion and will be included as part of the Municipal Use Master site plan.

- Pima and Dynamite Concept design

Mr. Ekblaw presented the site analysis, identifying drainage patterns, the power line corridor, associated roadways, and disturbed areas.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the master plan, identifying the parking and driveway areas. Staff will be working with the design firm providing feedback and developing a presentation that is expected to begin the public process in the fall.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Hamilton noted that traffic concerns, including the concerns about equestrian vehicles making left turns southbound on Pima will be analyzed by traffic engineers. Mr. Ekblaw said that the master plan will include 300 parking stalls that may or may not be included in the final design documents.

- Tom's Thumb Summer Construction

Mr. Ekblaw said that the exact dates for start of construction have not been determined, but prep work on vegetation removal has begun. The trailhead will be open over the summer with approximately 100 stalls closed, rotating during parking stall construction.

Chair Frost requested that staff provide reports on the trailhead concept and the possibility of expanded programming as needed in the future.

9. **STAFF REPORTS**

COS/Conservancy Year in Review Meeting

Mr. Ekblaw said a number of follow-up items are coming out of the meeting that staff will report on as they come up. Consideration is being given to increasing the meetings to biannually at the beginning of season and mid-season.

Wildland Fire Prevention Status

Mr. Hamilton presented a graphic depicting Dynamite and Pima areas and Dynamite and 136th Street, highlighting the different groups that worked in the areas. The goal is to remove flash fuels and primarily the red brome grass.

Mr. Murphy noted that since the Preserve is under Community Services, Community services and park staff were able to assist with the clearing.

July 4th Closure and Watch

Mr. Loleit said that trailheads will close at 3:00 p.m. on 4th of July and will be monitored by Pathfinders and Patrol. Public notice will be posted two weeks in advance.

APS 69kv Construction

Mr. Ekblaw said that APS will be putting a track out and gravel rubble strip at the Dynamite entrance to ensure they do not track mud onto the public streets. The City has closed the entrance access gate at Pima and Dynamite to the public and all APS equipment will use that access point. They are working with the transportation department to install temporary "no

parking" signs along Dynamite. The power line road from Hackamore to the Pima/Dynamite intersection will remain close through the construction cycle. Coordination between APS and the City will go through Mr. Loleit. Construction information will be updated as needed on the city website.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Alpert discussed the implementation by the City of Phoenix of a 100-degree law, which prohibits dogs on their trails if the temperature reaches 100 degrees and suggested that Scottsdale implement a similar rule.

Mr. Ekblaw said that because of the nature and size of the Preserve and the number of access points, enforcement could be a challenge. He suggested that signage and education would be the best tool for informing people about the dangers of the heat to their pets.

Commissioner Wenstrom suggested that staff bring forward a model of what implementing a 100-degree law would look like for the Preserve.

Commissioner McKeighan asked if there is anything more that the Commission could do to move the idea of the endowment forward. Mr. Ekblaw explained that there are legal and financial issues that are in the process of review with the City Attorney's office and the City Manager's office.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Financial Report and Endowment Update
Commercial Use Policy
Desert Discovery Center
Trailhead Design and Public Meeting Process

In addition to the above items, a discussion of the 100-degree law was requested as a future agenda item.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that he will be sending out a poll to Commissioners for dates for the DDC Special meeting.

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

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